

FOLLOWING FRANCIS REDFERN

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PART VII

Important Persons and Trade
in Uttoxeter in the
18th and early 19th Centuries.

Price 3op.

WE CLOSED PART VI of this History by noting that though there were still a few prominent "gentlemen" land-holders in Uttoxeter, a "yeoman" class had grown wealthier ; there were signs, too, that more of their farm lands were crofts and "closes", so that prominent yeomen were already owners of land.

It is intriguing to see also that even by 1629 we find indications of separate classes in the Uttoxeter district. First, the greater landowners inhabiting houses known as "mansions"; some were already selling some enclosed fields to a second type, who would appear to be true yeomen who relied on agriculture and animal breeding for their living ; originally a man of yeoman class was defined as a freehold countryman whose holding was valued at least at 40 shillings per annum. The chief Tradesmen citizens of the towns were usually equivalent socially to the yeomen, whose employees occasionally had some acres or less of their own but were scarcely as well off as the "journeymen" or skilled labourers working for the leather merchants, chairmakers, ironmongers, shoemakers and general shopkeepers of the towns.

The intermediate class, even in 1629, seems to be socially inferior to the true squires and gentlemen, but quite ready to join with them in transacting town business ; thus Richard Startin, Thomas Middleton, Edward Chamberlain and others acted with Anthony Kynnersley, Ralph Mynors, Francis Mynors and other gentlemen in managing the lands which provided for the maintenance of the "great stone bridge on the Dove in the confines of the counties of Stafford and Derby."

We also have a record of a similar mixed group of gentry and prominent townsmen joining Walter Mynors and Edward Blount to ensure that the charitable legacy made by Ann Blount in 1590 should be maintained. (This legacy provided loans for men who had lost cattle or suffered in a similar way ; the loans could not always be repaid, and this might have caused the charity to decline ; but the group of gentlemen and citizens agreed that there should always be sufficient money in hand by accepting a proposal that Walter Mynors made, pledging the payment of £14 per annum out of the proceeds from the land known as Swetholme, the property of Walter Mynors.

One can only admire the manner in which such citizens of the town were concerned with local welfare matters. We shall of course have to refer later to the combination of a number of charities in one authority ; but the present writer can remember that the Netherwood (the land between the Derby Road, where it joins the present by-pass, and eastward to within one field of the River Dove) was divided by shallow ditches, marked by stone blocks ; these were rented by farmers who mowed the grass for hay, and when the last of the hay had been carted away, the whole area of aftermath was sold by auction for grazing until winter ; it was then left to grow for the next hay crop, and the aftermath was sold as before.

Later the charity commissioners gave authority for the whole area to be sold, and for the capital sum thus obtained to be invested by the local trustees, the income was thus much greater than before.

Apart from this gradual change in social and economic matters, and the more exciting Jacobite risings in 1715 and 1745 there are a few developments in the Uttoxeter district which deserve notice. On more than one occasion the town was devastated by fire ; this was the more serious because so many houses were half-timbered and thatched ; also they cannot have been well-prepared to any great extent with fire-fighting apparatus. Such mechanism as water pumps are mentioned in Pepy's diary, which covered the period of the great fire of 1666, and of the experimental work of the Royal Society. Pepys was a member of this, not because he had much scientific knowledge, but because he seems to have had an insatiable curiosity, and on several occasions he mentioned what he had seen at some of the Society's meetings and what distinguished persons he met there.

The first disastrous fire is recorded as occurring on August 21st 1596, i.e. in summer time when the thatched roofs were most likely to burn readily. The Church Register states that the Vicarage was destroyed and that the Vicar (William Barnes) lost nearly all his goods. Redfern (p. 301 2nd Edn.)

also tells of the sympathy shown by the borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme, for a sum of £10 was voted for the relief of the losses suffered by Uttoxeter. The charred edges of the first volume of the Church Register still bear evidence that the fire might have destroyed our oldest Parish records of Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials.

Another very destructive fire occurred in 1672, beginning in an oil shop belonging to Richard Cludd in the old Sheep Market near the site of the Black Swan Inn. Richard Cludd lived on until January 1706 ; his age at burial is registered as 92.

By good fortune several half-timbered buildings escaped, and oak beams still remain there and in that part of the Market Place. The Old Talbot Inn still contains oak parts of the original building, and Redfern watched the demolition of old houses in an entry opposite his own old house, and wrote that some beams there showed signs of being charred by fire.

It is interesting to note that Redfern's old house in Carter Street, and the "Old Talbot" Inn in the Market Place both have "penthouse" projections ; these were originally "booths" or shop fronts where the proprietor's apprentices watched for likely customers ; Sir Walter Scott in his novel "The Fortunes of Nigel", dated in the reign of James I, describes such a shop projection belonging to the famous Scottish jeweller George Heriot, founder of the great Edinburgh Public School ; his legacy to this later provided for the foundation of the Heriot-Watt College.

The Balance Street fire must have caused considerable loss to owners of houses there, but led to some improvement, as the houses built to replace the old ones were of the type now known as "residential" ; even at the present day this is evident, but for many years a few small cottages and other buildings could still be seen. Within the memory of the present writer a blacksmith's workshop and shoeing forge was situated near to the present Police Station, which for many years previously had been a solicitor's office. The curiously different types of business premises exhibited in Balance Street as late as 1850 show how slowly changes occur even after a fire

which had destroyed so much about 170 years before. In a directory of the year mentioned (1850) three residents of Balance Street are listed as "gentry". There were also three surgeons and one veterinary surgeon, four solicitors, one stamp officer and one architect, two lock cutters, one leather and one timber merchant, one maltster and one agricultural engineer, one stone engraver, one horticulturist, one posting establishment (for hire of horses), two shoemakers, one bricklayer, seven shopkeepers ; among these was a small general shopkeeper related to Lord Byron's faithful servant Fletcher, who brought the poet's body home after his death in Greece, and later lived at his sister-in-law's shop in Uttoxeter ; the directory also lists one Farmer, presumably either retired or holding land outside the town (we have already noted that there were many barns etc. behind the houses in Balance St.)

It is clear that the newer more imposing residences were mingled with less pretentious houses and shops, and that some premises adjoining these were used for industrial purposes ; it is also clear that the wider thoroughfare to be found in Balance Street followed the replanning after the disastrous fire. Redfern also records (p. 335 of 2nd Edn.) that the Snape family had once owned property in Balance Street, and had sold one site to Richard Mottram. This site had remained as it was left after the great fire ; Richard Mottram was a blacksmith and built himself a house and workshop on the newly purchased ground, and later this was bought by Thomas Bentley, blacksmith.

Redfern mentions that Sir Edward Bagot and Mr. Kynnersley came to the town (possibly by order of the Stafford Quarter Sessions to make enquiries about the fire) and the constables' accounts show that their expenses amounted to 15 /-. The same accounts show that a petition was presented to a judge (one supposes at Assizes) though exact details of the business are not given ; the petitioners on behalf of the town were the Vicar, Rev. Michael Edge, and Mr. Chamberlain (a member of a prominent family in Uttoxeter at the time) ; their expenses amounted to 12 /6, and were paid by the parish. Unfortunately our information remains scanty, and we do not know the result of the visit to Stafford ; but it must have been some months, or years, before the owners of the destroyed houses could have recouped their losses.

Redfern mentions fires which broke out at later dates, one destroying two houses in Stone Road, or Tinkers' Lane as it was then known. It may well have been one of the cottage forges there which caused the fire. Redfern also records a fire in workshops and ironworks at the corner of Wood Lane belonging to Mr. Bewley, and later used as malthouses by Mr. Stretch ; he might have added that later still the buildings came to be used for mineral-waters manufacture by the same gentleman. Later we shall take note of a great fire at the lower end of High Street, and of another in the paint shop at Messrs. Bamford's works ; in fighting this fire the Brigade actually used up all the water in the reservoir on the Bramshall Road.

The only evidence of Bewley's ironworks which the present writer can recall is that the name was cast on the iron plates in some pavements of the town which covered the entrances to cellars ; some plates can still be seen, but they have replaced those made by Bewley's, or the old maker's name has worn off.

We may now return to the local tradesmen of the town during or before the industrial revolution ; thus Silver Street gets its name from the jewellery manufacture carried on from before 1800 by the Copestake brothers ; at that time they occupied Mr. Wood's old house at Dove Bank, already mentioned in these pages. The business was at one time very prosperous, being centred at Birmingham, and many town children obtained small sums of money by collecting local pebbles which were suitable for polishing. Redfern recalls that Fole Mills on Tean Brook, once Messrs. Vernon's flour mills, and later (after being almost destroyed by fire) being adapted for the present milk factory of the Co-operative Society, had actually been started by one of the Copestake jewellery partners. For some years these jewellers had close trade connections with the famous Wedgwood Potteries. (It is a fact that the Wedgwood family had members in Uttoxeter in the 17th century ; Jane, daughter of John Wedgwood, was baptised at Uttoxeter Church in 1671. Bridget, wife of John Wedgwood was buried in Uttoxeter Churchyard on 22nd June, 1703. John Wedgwood's will was proved at Lichfield in 1711. At Bramshall, Richard Wedgwood is said to have lived to a great age ; his will was proved at Lichfield on April 30th, 1712 ; and the Church Register at Milwich has Ann Wedgwood baptized 1670.

The manufacture of jewellery did not continue to thrive for various reasons, and Mary Howitt related that as a girl, she had been taken by her mother to visit Miss Copestake, daughter of one of the partners, who continued to live at the old house on Dove Bank. This lady had made use of a large building to set up a small factory where girls were employed at lace-making. Mary Howitt's daughter Margaret adds that Miss Copestake did not find the business sufficiently remunerative. She retired from it and "the frames became widely scattered".

This occurred about the year 1805 ; the town had a few other industries, such as tanning, wool weaving and brick making.

The plentiful supply of oak available had for many years enabled a number of clock-case makers to flourish, and this had led to several small establishments where men made the actual clock movements. The names Sillito, Slater, Bayley, Bennett and Hartwell are examples ; during the last eight years I have had enquiries from persons as far apart as Amsterdam and Wales, who have bought grandfather clocks "made" in Uttoxeter. I have also had numerous enquiries about clocks labelled as made in Uttoxeter, the so-called "makers" being really clock-case makers, who merely fitted assemblies of parts supplied, usually by brass-founders who really had "made" the movements. At one time a firm of brass and iron workers at Lichfield seem to have made a practice of supplying these assemblies, though their part in the work does not appear to be acknowledged. There was a "clock maker" named Butler at Tutbury from about 1790 until well into the 19th century ; I have one of his clocks which was dated by the late Mr. Wainwright of Fenny Bentley as about 1796.

The firm of Bayley moved from Uttoxeter to Newcastle-under-Lyme, and a William Bayley continued to work as a brass founder and clock-maker until at least 1850.

Redfern rescued from oblivion an amusing incident concerning the inscription on a clock-maker's tombstone in Uttoxeter Churchyard. (Many tombstones have now been moved to the outside boundary and many have been laid flat).

The clock-maker, whose clocks are still to be found occasionally, and still working well, was Joseph Slater, who died on November 21st, 1822.

The inscription on his tombstone was :—

*Here lies one who strove to equal time,
A task too hard, each power too sublime ;
Time stopped his motion, o'erthrew his balance wheel,
Wore off his pivots tho' made of hardened steel ;
Broke all his springs, the verge of life decayed,
And now he is as though he'd ne'er been made.*

* * * * *

*Such frail machine till Time's no more shall rust,
And the Archangel wakes our sleeping dust ;
Then with assembled worlds in glory join,
And sing — “The hand that made us is divine.”*

In the above two more lines were first engraved (the whole was on a brass plate), but were obliterated as indicated by asterisks, by order of the clergyman of the Parish, who thought them objectionable for a churchyard memorial. Redfern was able to add those, as follows :-

*“Not for want of oiling ; this he tried ;
If that had done, why then he'd ne'er have died”*

The term “oiling” may still be heard, a slang jocular description of “drinking”; we must conclude that Joseph's fondness for liquor was notorious.

We have no record to show the author of the verse; he was familiar with the working parts of a clock; he must also have been, one thinks, well read in English Literature, for “The hand that made us is divine” is quoted from a religious poem by Addison about the “assembled worlds” which were the planets, supposed by some to make celestial music as they whirled on their circuits.

As we have now reached the beginning of the 19th century in our record of Uttoxeter clock-makers, it may be as well to end the list. Benjamin Bell, who owned the land “Tinker's Croft” where the present Telephone Exchange stands, had

a small room in his business premises at the bottom of High Street, where Messrs. Bell and Durns' last apprentice, William Smith, remembered that a number of clocks were made ; Smith died recently at over 80 years of age, having worked for many years for the firm "Bell and Dams" ; Edward Dams, Benjamin Bell's orphan nephew, joined his uncle after leaving Alleyne's Grammar School, and many of their clocks (most of these "assembled" but others actually "made") can still be found all round Uttoxeter. We shall have occasion in a future part to record more of Edward Dams and his famous family of clergyman sons. A memorial to Edward Dams can be seen on the west wall of the nave of Uttoxeter Church.

We have now to return to our account of Uttoxeter trades from the end of the 17th century. The large building off the north side of Bridge Street was erected as a place where fleeces could be stored to await despatch to woollen factories after the sheep shearing was ended in Spring. The premises were later used for various storage purposes (even furniture, beer, and cheese) before they passed to Mr. J. Phillips as motor garages.

It appears that home spinning of different materials was still to be found where industrious persons lived. Mary Howitt tells us of her mother's insistence on useful spare-time occupations ; the yarn was taken to the home of Mr. Pedley, who lived at a smallholding which still remains, a short distance from the road on the north side of the Stafford Road at Popinjay. Mary Howitt describes the house as having a wonderful garden cultivated by Miss Pedley, with fields plentifully dotted in Spring with cowslips and wild daffodils. Elsewhere Mary Howitt some years later described how, when passing along Tinker's Lane, she was accustomed to see a man and boy at work in one of the rope-walks there ; "the man walked backwards and forwards in a pleasant little paddock surrounded with high hedges and trees" ; (this was the croft now occupied by the new telephone exchange). The rope-maker's boy could be seen "under his shed at the end, turning his wheel. On the other side of the road was the sieve-maker's shop, with its door thrown open, and a confused heap of shavings and ashen hoops, and sieves of all sorts and sizes, seen within." (p. 174, Vol. 1 of Mary Howitt's "Wood Leighton".)

There are several references in Redfern (and elsewhere) to other small industries which had some significance in the town and district during the 18th century, and for a few years in the 19th. One was weaving, both of wool, flax, and cotton. The woollen business was carried on by a branch of the Bladen family (this spelling seems to indicate that the Bladon family, to whom Uttoxeter owes a considerable debt for their public services, was not concerned with this trade) but Redfern states that as early as 1730 one of the apprentice records in a chest in Uttoxeter Church shows that William Ford was bound to Samuel Bladon, Wool Merchant in Uttoxeter.

The Bladen business was moved to Moddershall, near Stone, for a branch of the firm existed there in 1745; in that year William Bladen, son of John Bladen of Uttoxeter, was apprenticed to James Bladen, of Moddershall, and the firm is still in existence in North Staffordshire at the present day. Cotton spinning and weaving was another trade which flourished at one time, and the name "Cotton Mill Farm" on Tcean Brook recalls this, though in the period mentioned by Redfern there were small factories or "jenny shops" in the town where female employees worked. The old Cotton Mill was the lowest of three mills on Tcean Brook, the first being the present Titley's Mill (now disused); the second was situated at Bangalore, where the brook divides a short distance below Titley's Mill, the northern branch flowing into the River Dove below Eaton Banks; the southern branch worked the Bangalore Mill, which Redfern stated to have been first a "fulling" mill (where woollen cloth had oil or fatty impurities removed); then it became a corn mill, and even later a "rag" mill, presumably for making rag pulp for paper. Next came the third mill, now a farmhouse, on the same branch of the brook; it was a typical cotton mill of the early industrial revolution; the tracks by which the waggons from this mill reached the Rocester road can still be traced. In a directory of 1818, this mill is already listed as "the old Cotton Mill, now occupied by Samuel Steel, farmer." The Rocester Mill on the Dove was bought by Richard Arkwright in 1781.

There had been a "tammy" weaving industry at Tutbury; this "tammy" was a rough kind of worsted cloth, used for making dresses for women up to the end of the 18th century. The tammy weavers changed their work to produce cotton cloth about 1781. The Mill on the Dove at Tutbury is said to have been used both for cotton and corn as late as 1850.

This mill had been in existence for several centuries, though the actual date of the first mill on this site is uncertain, but thanks to the aid of Mr. Charlesworth, I have the official suggestion of the present owners (The Tutbury Mill Company, a branch of Courtaulds Ltd.) that the first mill was erected by Monks of the Abbey, founded, wrote Redfern, by "Richard Bacon as a Monastery of Black Canons." He probably took this from Mosley's "History of Ashbourne" (p.295 et seq.) ; there it is said "The Charter of Richard Bacon in 1146" led to the foundation and endowment of the Priory (? Abbey) of the Order of St. Augustine. This foundation received various Charters, being finally established by King Henry III. At the Dissolution by King Henry VIII in 1536 and 1539, the mill property passed to Richard Trentham. In later Tudor times Richard Hacket and Thomas Trentham were granted the property and later still Lord Cullen and Thomas Bainbrigge became owners of the estate, the latter in 1671. The official record states that although the deeds do not mention the mills, it is certain that they formed part of the estate. We can also note that by the above date, the difficulties of dealing with such a flow of water as the Dove could provide would be overcome. Indeed it seems that more recent excavations show the former existence of several sluices. Hence corn grinding by three separate mills was possible, and fulling work was also included ; one account indeed mentions leather work at the mill ; several processes in the production of leather were (and are) facilitated by the use of machinery and water was always needed --- we have already recorded the tanneries round Uttoxeter ; it is possible that some place names mentioned in the survey of 1629 had connection with this trade, which has a history going back centuries.

Soaking skins in lime was one part of the process, but it is only conjecture that suggests that John Aboll's field on Balance Hill called "Lyme Pitts" may have been one site ; so too "Lampit's Lake" where Thomas Danyell and Francis Chamberlain held two small crofts near to the mill now the modern Titley's Mill. Like "Lyme Pitts" this could have had a connection with pools used as part of tanning ; the machinery of a mill was also used, and one product of e.g. Rochester Dove Mill was leather.

Whether our conjecture is true or not, we can be on much more definite ground when we find that in the same area as Lampit's Lake there were in 1629 three "Saddler's pits" in the Botham field close to Tean Brook, held by Edward Gilbert, James Keeling, and John Dynes (a butcher by trade).

The use of water-mill power continued in the river valleys of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire and elsewhere until the time of James Watt and after. His various patents caused the replacement of water power by steam from about 1780 onwards. The great increase in coal mining which resulted led to the closure of many water mills ; though the power obtained from a mill, once built, was cheap, only a limited number of machines could be worked as compared with steam power. However, some mills on Tean Brook, the Blythe and the Dove, were at work until well on in the 20th century ; the large cotton factory buildings at Tean, the Vernon Flour Mill, two of the three Mills on Tean Brook, mentioned above, and the Rocester and Tutbury Mills on the Dove can be placed on this list. Redfern rightly notes the traces of a Mill Dam at the Picknalls, disused even before the railway was built to pass through the site in 1848.

While on this subject, we may recall the Windmill on the Heath, a high point where sufficient wind was usually available. From various sources, census returns and directories, we find the following listed as Millers on the Heath, Joseph Bradshaw, corn miller (1850), William Saxelby, corn miller (1850), and John Gregory (1872).

The old wooden sails, two still with slats, and two being only bare poles, were unfit for work in the 1870's, but the solidly built brick structure was dismantled only after the first world war, and the bricks were used to build a house for the late Mr. Austin in Holly Road known as "Beechcroft".

The Mill at Fole, first built, as noted in Part VI of this work, by a lapidary, soon became a large flour mill of the Vernon firm. (The cottages opposite still bear the name "Millennium" the famous trade name of Vernon flour). It was practically destroyed by a disastrous fire in 1894, when the firemen worked for three days trying to save the mill. It was a regular sight up to that time to see enormous waggons taking corn from Uttoxeter Railway Goods Station to Fole and returning with the flour for despatch. The waggons were drawn usually by four powerful Shire horses. Stramshall Mill was used for the same type of work until the beginning of the 20th century.

Some further confirmation may be drawn from the fact that in the same year of the survey no surname "Sadler" occurs ; so the word must refer to leather trade.

On p. 14 of Part VI of this work, I have given the names of two leather merchants of the later Stuart period ; we have the wills of John Alkins (1672) and Thomas Alkins (1678). The latter married Peter Lightfoot's sister Mary, and the family occupied a leading position in Uttoxeter. All this appears to confirm our conjecture regarding the tanners and leather produce in the district.

Since the flour milling at Fole ceased, the site has become one of the largest Co-operative Milk factories in the Midlands, employing 180 persons and handling 50,000 gallons of milk per day.

To return to Uttoxeter trade matters, we have to note that until the end of the 19th century, Uttoxeter was not drawn to any great extent into the wide development of the industrial revolution. We shall deal later with the founding of Messrs. Bamfords Ltd. in 1871, the Biscuit Factory of Messrs. Elkes, and the gradual growth of the Milk Depot now known as "Unigate" ; modern transport, first by rail, then by motor-vehicles, has enabled these industries to grow rapidly, and we shall also record the new Earth-Moving Machine Factory of Mr. J. C. Bamford at Rocester. In the late 18th century and the first part of the 19th, the only industries (apart from the lapidary and jewellery work already described in Part VI) which had been developed in the town were cork-cutting and various trades using the plentiful supplies of oak and other timber available. Most of these trades produced vessels and implements made by skilled hand operation ; Redfern himself, as we noted in Part I of this work, was apprenticed as a "cooper" ; he was not only a skilled maker of barrels to supply the local brewery, and even farmhouses, but turned his hand to other products which required fine oak timber ; his skill was shown in making wooden measures, household vats, churns, and similar products which found a market in the district, where many houses and most farms had their own brew-houses, and made butter and cheese from their own dairy herds. Alongside the Hockley Brook, and later by the railway side, the easy transport and the supply of water enabled fellmonger and tanning work to be done with the great number of skins from the large animal population of the fertile pastures of the neighbourhood. (Extensive pollution of the brook seems to have been readily permitted).

The Cattle Market carried on by charter for centuries, must have become quite a nuisance in the centre of the town (as it does in some Irish towns even now). This rendered necessary the opening of the Smithfield, which was built in 1853 - 54. But most of these activities belong to the latter half of the 19th century. For many years the business affairs of the town needed only two Banks, with comparatively limited clerical staffs. This can be contrasted with the present five, whose turn-over must exceed by many times those of the early 19th century.

As Redfern noted, the population made moderate growth (and on occasion some small decline) between 1801 (2,779) and 1871 (4,692).

For a short time after the opening of the Uttoxeter branch of the Cauldron Canal, there was some increase in industries where coal, lime, and similar heavy transport was needed. A small cluster of work-shops and industrial premises could be seen at what was called the "Wharf" end of High Street. Apart from an easier supply of coal to the Gas Works, inaugurated in 1839 near the Canal Wharf, there were also lime-kilns at the wharf, and even a plant for wood distillation, to make what was known to Redfern as pyrolignous acid ; this was closely related chemically to acetic acid and methyl alcohol, but commercial chemistry was not greatly developed in the early 19th century, and this small Uttoxeter industry soon died out. In fact, the canal really came too late to be of permanent value to the town ; the railway was ready by 1848 to provide transport which had only been available for about thirty-six years by canal. We shall record later the beginning of the North Staffordshire line ; Redfern surprisingly made little reference to this, though he must have seen the construction of both the Stoke and Churnet Valley branches, and the building of the first stations at Dove Bank and at Bridge Street. The name Bridge Street really has reference to the small old bridge over the brook ; the great bridge spanning both railway, brook, and the road leading to the Goods Station was built some years after the railway.

One great advantage came to travellers who had previously had to rely on coach and chaise transport, for by rail at the middle of the 19th century one could leave Stoke at 8-0 a.m. and arrive in London at 1 p.m., whereas the "Light Post" coach to London left the "White Hart" hotel at 6-30 p.m.

and passengers had to endure inconvenient hours on the road ; the "Light Post" to Liverpool left the hotel at 4-30 a.m. In several novels of Charles Dickens we find descriptions of such coaching days, and all museums have pictures and almanacs recalling the pleasant country roadways, and some of the unpleasent journeys under wintry conditions. Redfern (pp. 389 and 390, 2nd Edn.) gives details of all these ; he might have added that in the town in 1876 there were two Coach builders ; these not only made coaches and carriages for those living in such country mansions as Loxley Hall, Doveridge Hall, The Heybridge, Wood Seat and so on, but had a large output of horse-drawn vehicles such as traps, gigs, dogcarts (so-called), spring carts, and "floats" for tradesmen and farmers.

The types of farm waggons varied in different parts of England ; specimens are still be seen in museums, and a few even on farms, for they were made by craftsmen, using the best timber obtainable for each part, and have endured the strain of many loads of hay and corn. Curiously enough, they were not difficult to move when empty, the rear wheels having a generous diameter, and once the vehicle had started the great weight did not appear to be a disadvantage. Putting on the iron hoop (or tyre) round the felloes of a wheel was a combined task for wheelwright and village smith ; the hoop was made rather smaller than the circumference of the wheel ; a ring of small fires was made to expand the hoop, which could then be fitted ; water was then thrown on the hot circumference and the shrinking hoop tightened itself round the felloes.

The continued use of such vehicles also provided work for a number of blacksmiths ; each village in the district had its "village blacksmith", and there were, even in 1876, no fewer than 17 in the Uttoxeter postal district, and six in the town itself. The magnificent breed of horses dating back to the heavy horses of fully armoured knights, and encouraged by John of Gaunt, still provided farmers, brewers, even railways with the chief means of heavy transport ; and this part of the Midlands still bred "shire" horses, and such famous stallions as Paxton, Harold, and a number of Culwich Abbey sires maintained by the Duncombe family. Further evidence of the dependence of surrounding villages is provided by the number of local "carriers" ; these brought many village visitors and shop-customers on Market and Fair days ; as late

as 1872 there were 20 carriers who had recognised stopping places at various inns ; four of these made journeys to Uttoxeter on other days of the week, and provided local transport facilities which have hardly been equalled by present day buses. In making this comparison one has to balance a slow speed (disadvantage) against the possibility of getting at all from A to B (advantage).

To return to local industry in cart, coach and carriage building ; this has of course been eliminated in modern times by the motor car, but it is worth recording that the 19th century saw the giving of personal names to carriages etc. as had happened in the case of furniture, e.g. Chesterfield and Davenport ; or clothing, e.g. Chesterfield, Ulster or Norfolk jacket ; or travelling items, e.g. Gladstone bag ; so in vehicles drawn by horses, we find Victorias, Stanhopes, Broughams, Hansoms, etc. There were two firms, Halls in High Street, and Richardsons in Park Street, who for many years in the 19th century built various types of horse-drawn vehicles, both for aristocrats, agricultural, and commercial customers. Modern car show windows are a familiar sight, and gleaming cellulose polish on their exhibits catches the eye ; the same gleaming surface could be remarked on the coaches and carriages which were exhibited in the same way that motor cars are now shown in garages, behind plate glass windows. The fine shining surfaces were achieved by the craftsmen of the time, when most early 19th century directories listed "coach painting" as a special trade. We have seen how Uttoxeter in the late 18th century, developed a number of small trades outside the main industrial revolution ; though some workers carried on their craft at home or in small buildings, Uttoxeter escaped many of the unpleasant results of the factories which had arisen in the larger industrial centres ; we have few ugly streets, and no heaps of industrial waste like those which the authorities are trying to improve in the "Black" Country of South Staffordshire, and the Potteries district in the North of the County. We have also seen that the trades followed by Uttoxeter people arose from what may be termed "natural" demands, and facilities for meeting these demands out of such local resources as oak timber, clay deposits, skins of the many farm animals treated in tanneries.

However, there seems to have been nothing more than the wide use of corks in breweries and household brew houses

which caused "cork cutting" to become of considerable importance in Uttoxeter during the 19th century ; the slabs of thick oak bark are produced by stripping from a special species of oak grown in Portugal, Spain, and other Mediterranean countries ; the oak bark was, of course, imported after being specially treated and dried. It is remarkable that in 1850 Wolverhampton is listed as having one cork cutter, Worcester had four,, Newcastle-under-Lyme had one, while Uttoxeter, a much smaller town, had four ; these were Kynnersley and Shenton, G. Miller, J. Vernon and Co., and J. Wilders. This difference between Uttoxeter and other Staffordshire towns may perhaps be due to enterprise on the part of employers, but must also have flourished through the perseverance and skill of their workmen ; special round sharp-edged cutting tools were used, and these were usually attached to arms anchored at the end farthest from the operator. There was little waste of material allowed, for the small pieces of cork were used by linoleum factories, and other pieces were used for making black pigments.

In our account of the gradual progress made in trade in Uttoxeter, despite the demands made by both sides during the Civil War, we have omitted an interesting aid which was adopted all over England ; that is, the use of Traders' Tokens. Redfern devoted pp. 386 - 388 of his 2nd Edition to a well-illustrated account of local tokens stating that some were in use during his own life-time. But he was correct in his description of the early tokens of the time of Queen Elizabeth ; much of Redfern's account is taken, as he says, from a North Staffs. Field Club paper by a Newcastle member, Mr. Arthur Leech.

Redfern gives the scarcity of small change as the reason for the introduction of trade tokens, usually of small value -- half-pence and farthings. But the true cause of this scarcity of small change was that for centuries the only English coins were gold and silver ; this in 1194 the "mark" was the usual coin, worth 13 /4. By 1344 we find the "noble" was the chief coin ; it was of gold and worth 6 /8 ; a little later there was the "rose noble" worth 10 /- with the figure of a rose. About 100 years later, in the time of Edward IV, the Yorkist leader in the Wars of the Roses, the chief coin was stamped with the figure of an angel ; its value was 10 /- and "angels" were still in use under the Tudor monarchs ; indeed, the last "angels" were coined by Charles I. Pennies were coins in use as far back as Anglo-Saxon times, but were not copper

until the reign of Charles II ; the earlier silver pennies were stamped with a cross and could thus be broken into half-pence and even farthings.

They could also be “clipped” by dishonest persons ; on one occasion (noted by Redfern on pp. 144 - 145 of 2nd Edn.) the constables of Uttoxeter had in their hands so many “clipped” coins that they were obliged to exchange them for £1 . 2 . 9 worth of legal, unclipped coins. Indeed, it was not until 1662 that new silver coins were minted with milled edges, and ten years later halfpennies and farthings were made of copper. In Samuel Pepys’ Diary, under May 19th, 1663, he records that he was invited to dine with the Master of the Mint ; during a discussion it was taken for certainty that hiding and hoarding of money was responsible for the periodic scarcity of available coins ; indeed, Pepys himself had a hoard of gold coins, which he sent to be buried at Brampton, near Cambridge, when the Dutch fleet sailed up the Medway in 1667. (On December 31st, 1666, he went through his yearly accounts and found that he was worth over £(6,000).

It was customary for trade tokens to be stamped with the name and town of the trader, the date and value (usually half-penny) ; some tokens were also stamped with the arms of the particular trade-guild of the merchant.

Redfern printed illustrations of two tokens, and gave information of others. The two illustrations are (1) of an octagonal token of William Cartwright - obverse : William Cartwright, 1668, and having part of the Arms of the Mercers’ Company ; reverse : a pair of balances, and “In Uttoxeter his Halfpenny” ; (2) a circular token, obverse : Robert Gilbert and part of the Mercers’ Arms ; reverse : In Uttoxeter, 1664, his Half-penny. He records also the token of John Halsey, 1668, again with part of the Mercers’ Arms, the reverse having “In Uttoxeter, his Half-penny. (We have previously noted that there were a number of Mercers’ shops in Uttoxeter at this period).

Other tokens given by Redfern include those of William Laythropp, stamped with the Royal Arms and dated 1663, in Uttoxeter, his Halfpenny ; Redfern suggests that the Royal Arms were used because William Laythropp was probably the innkeeper of “The King’s Arms.”

Next we have another octagonal token, that of William Leese, 1668, with the arms of the Grocers' Company, reverse : in Uttoxeter, his Halfpenny ; also a token of John Leese, damaged, with only the trader's name, in Uttoxeter (*sic*) 1663 -- no value stated. This was a plain token with only the trader's name James Loyed, Uttoxeter, his Half-penny 1660. Another Innkeeper, of the "George and Dragon", Jeffery Power, issued a half-penny token in Uttoxeter 1666. Lastly we have the token of a loyal Innkeeper, Will Wakelin ; he was probably the landlord of the "Crown" Inn, for his token was stamped "1663, in Uttoxeter, his Half-penny -- Vive-Le-Roy."

In the correspondence columns of the Uttoxeter Advertiser, of August 26th, 1970, Mr. C. S. Orme, who has made a close study of trade tokens, contributed an interesting account of tokens issued in Uttoxeter and other towns in the Midlands. Mr. Orme mentioned that a total of eleven Uttoxeter tokens are now known, while 130 varieties were issued in the 17th century in 31 places in Staffordshire. It is noteworthy that of these, 93 had the value of $\frac{1}{2}$ d, and 37 were farthing tokens. Mr. Orme added the interesting information that the traders concerned numbered 35 Mercers, 12 ironmongers, 11 innkeepers, 2 drapers, and 2 apothecaries ; the following trades were represented by only one : bakers, booksellers, carriers, haberdashers, hatters, merchant tailors, pewterers (in a previous list of the household goods of Thomas Salt of Bearhill, Uttoxeter, in 1679, we noted that many utensils were of pewter, and were kept in a special "pewter" room), salters, scythe-makers, and weavers.

Mr. Orme also noted that of Staffordshire towns where tokens were issued, only Stafford with 16, and Lichfield with 14, exceeded Uttoxeter's total of 11.

We should add that the copper coins minted by Charles II in 1672 followed an unsuccessful attempt made by James I to provide small change in copper ; he granted to Lord Harrington a patent for a copper coinage, but so many complaints were received regarding the unsatisfactory products of this patent that in 1649 the monopoly was cancelled.

We should also record that when small change was needed by factory owners in the later years of the 18th century, to pay the wages of their employees (some of whom were children

only six years of age) trade tokens again came into use, against the law, and it was not until 1823 that they were finally abolished.

I can recall a story that some years ago, while a workman was repairing a wall inside an old inn, he found a hollow space in which a bag of tokens had been hidden ; they may well have been used about 1823, and had probably been hoarded in expectation that they might come into use in later years. Nobody now seems to know how far this story is correct, or whose tokens they had been, or indeed what became of the tokens themselves.

Our notice of these aids to the trade of Uttoxeter has taken us back to the 17th century, to the period when some Uttoxeter citizens became prominent for various reasons. In a previous part we have followed the life story, for instance, of Dr. John Lightfoot, his aunt Katherine Mastergent, his father Thomas, Vicar of Uttoxeter, and his brother, Peter Lightfoot.

These were all included in his History by Redfern, but there were others whom he mentions who might have been less well-known had Redfern not sought out the reasons for their fame. We will mention them here ; first we have Thomas Allen, whose career at Oxford as a mathematician began in 1551. He has more than once been confused with Thomas Alleyne, Priest, who died in 1558, and was the founder of the Grammar Schools at Stevenage, Stone, and Uttoxeter. Thomas Allen, the Oxford mathematician, however, refused to take Holy Orders, and moved from Trinity College, Oxford, to Gloucester Hall, which was the origin of the present Worcester College. Checkley and Bucknall in North Staffordshire have both been given as Thomas Allen's birthplace instead of Uttoxeter, but we have no possible evidence either way. He continued at Oxford until his death in 1632 at the age of 90. Redfern also records that owing to Thomas Allen's ability as a mathematician, he, like others of his time, was suspected of using his knowledge in supernatural ways, as happened to the famous Dr. Dee, a contemporary of Thomas Allen.

Next there was Sir Symon Degge, who was born at Uttoxeter in 1612, a descendant of a high-ranking family of Stratmshall

The Degge family had already occupied a prominent position locally. In 1625 Thomas Degge had joined with Richard Startin to buy the timber in the Uttoxeter Ward of Needwood Forest, "being very much" ; they sold it (no doubt at considerable profit) piece-meal to any who would buy it. (see p. 15 of Part IV). Symon Degge studied law, and was appointed Judge of West Wales by Charles II. He is chiefly remembered as the writer of manuscript notes in the margin of a Cambridge University copy of the "Natural History of Staffordshire" which has been preserved. Redfern was especially interested in Sir Symon, who owned an unusual house which still stands in Fenny Bentley, Redfern's native place. Sir Symon Degge owned the farmhouse with a tower, resembling one of the border strongholds which once were to be found between England and Scotland ; Redfern's 2nd Edn. had an illustration of this house, and a reference to Sir Symon's name being cut in the lead at the top of the tower. Sir Symon died at Blythe Bridge, Kingstone, at the age of 92. He was twice married, according to an inscription copied by Redfern from a Kingstone Church memorial his first wife died in 1652. Another inscription recorded the death of his second wife on March 30th, MDCIXCVI" Redfern states that soon after he had copied these inscriptions, the stone, already in poor condition, had lost all traces of the memorials. Either Redfern, or the original mason who cut the inscription appears to have been uncertain about dates expressed in Roman figures. Sir Symon is stated on the memorial to have died on Feb. 10th, MDCICII ; this seems to be the sculptor's doubtful mode of expressing 1704, the correct year, but the Roman numerals do not appear to agree with that year ; the year of his second wife's death is equally vague, though the month date, March 30th, is clear. There must be an error, either in the stonemason's work (perhaps an error made by the person instructing him), or in Redfern's copy (not very likely).

The usual Roman symbols M, D, C, L, X, V, I could be used to express any number, the rule being that subtraction could give a number desired, but only by placing the symbol of the number to be subtracted *before* the next higher symbol ; thus IX (take one unit from 10 to obtain 9) and XL (take ten from fifty to obtain 40) and so on.

Mr. Munden, Mathematics master at Alleyne's, Uttoxeter, has kindly examined these inscriptions, and has pointed out that by omitting the letter I (in the middle of each) some

sensible meaning can be obtained ; but the problem still remains ; MDCCII gives 1702 as the year of Degge's death ; this should be 1704, according to the Dictionary of National Biography. There seems to be no explanation of the peculiar use of Roman numerals

Sir Symon Degge's descendants must have inherited a large amount of property, but Redfern reports that later generations became involved in claims, which do not seem to have been acknowledged.

Redfern quotes an agreement made by John Ward Yeoman of Loxley in 1768 with a Robert Degg Senior and Robert Degg Junior, that he would continue to press their claim to some of Sir Symon's wealth, only receiving one shilling himself for every pound that he obtained for them. It does not appear that there was any result of Mr. Ward's efforts. Redfern also gives a document signed by another of the several Robert Degg's in the family, but no date is given, and the story (on p. 337 of 2nd Edn.) does not state whether this Robert Degg gained anything.

On the same page Redfern gives the agreement (referred to above) between John Ward and two other Robert Degg's ; there may be some significance in the fact that Robert Degg the elder of the two could only confirm his assent by "making his mark", it is remarkable that we have here a Robert Degg senior (in 1768) who was illiterate ; but in 1801 it is certain that the father of Thomas Degg, Wheelwright, of Uttoxeter Heath (who was known personally by both Redfern and the present writer) had taken Counsel's opinion on his right to at least part of Sir Symon's estate. Thomas Degg has a granddaughter still living in Uttoxeter -- Miss Felgate, and I remember two brothers named Degg living at Stramshall at the turn of the century. Redfern had also been in correspondence with a Mr. W. H. Degge of the Surgeon-General's Office, Washington U.S.A., from which it appears that some of the Degg family emigrated to America in the reign of King Charles II, and the family had become numerous in the Southern and Western States.

This story from the United States does not occur in Redfern's 1865 edition and so the correspondence must have been carried on after the American Civil War, which ended in 1865.

The next distinguished inhabitant of Uttoxeter to be noted is Samuel Bentley, the Uttoxeter poet. He lived in his own house in the Market Place -- the site now occupied by Allport's the, Jeweller's and Clock and Watch business. Bentley was fortunate in owning farm property at Yeaveley, near Ashbourne ; he never married, but his three maiden sisters lived with him, all dying during the last years of his life. He himself died in his 79th year, 1803. His will, which Redfern has not recorded, was made in February 1801, and has many items of interest which are to be found below ; but Redfern rightly described him as a man of culture, who had a very full knowledge of both Greek and Latin literature ; Bentley himself in one of his poems — on the River Dove — acknowledges his debt in classical literature to the Rev. G. Malbon, Vicar of Uttoxeter, to whom there still exists a memorial on the North side of the chancel. To Bentley he was "Maccenas, Teacher and Friend", which is probably the reason for the poet's classical knowledge ; as Redfern also pointed out, he may have gained some knowledge from Alleyne's Grammar School ; on p. 26 of "The History of Alleyne's Grammar School, 1558 - 1958" we find that after some rather unpleasant events, Trinity College, Cambridge, seem to have appointed well-qualified Masters ; one of these was Mr. Burnett, who had a pupil named Skrymsher (distinctly related to Dr. Johnson). Burnett moved to Ashbourne Grammar School in 1713. He had been a "Grecian" at Christ's Hospital, London, and there was evidently a high standard of Classics at Alleyne's. Samuel Bentley could not have been Burnett's pupil, but might well have been at Alleyne's to benefit by current classical studies. In addition to his literary knowledge, he was an accomplished musician, playing the harpsichord, the flute, and the 'cello ; he owned a fine specimen of the last-named, which was used in the early years of Uttoxeter Wesleyan Church, and in Redfern's own day still existed, being the property of a Mr. Hudson.

Bentley's collected poems, the chief of which were "The River Dove", "The Bowling Green" (in which he describes not only a modern Crown Green, but the social gatherings, with fine refreshments provided by the ladies of Uttoxeter), the pastoral poem on "The Haymakers" were published by Stephens, at the sign of the "Bible and Crown" London, in 1774. I was able to read these long ago in a copy belonging to my grandfather, but it is almost impossible to find a copy

of the book now ; in fact, when I wished the County Library to find one, it was only from Aberdeen University Library that one was obtained ; this is regrettable, for Bentley found customers for 231 volumes. His classical education evidently included studies of various metres, and he lived and wrote when 18th century poets were leading up to the great revival of interest in Nature, which was carried on by Coleridge and Wordsworth. Redfern quotes (p. 176 2nd Edn.) Bentley's verses "Invocation to Peace 1802", where the first letters of the lines follow the alphabet, showing Bentley's skilful use of words rather than true poetry. However, on p. 13 of the same edition we find the opening stanza of Bentley's poem on the River Dove, in which the poet exhibits his mastery over a metrical form used by Cowper in "The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk" (the origin of Defoe's Robinson Crusoe). This was written by Cowper in 1782 ; he had also written an "Ode to Peace", and Bentley probably knew both of these. He had doubtless previously learned the classical use of the Anapaest foot from the Rev. G. Malbon. Some critics would hardly agree that the lively metre is entirely suited to the description of Uttoxeter and the Dove Valley.

As Redfern relates, Bentley was almost entirely blinded by a lightning flash when he was 75, but he lived until he reached the age of 81, having composed an autobiographical poem in 1799 ; Redfern states that the original copy of this was one of his possessions. Bentley was fortunate in having a faithful servant, Mrs. Baxter, during the last five years of his life and in later years, Redfern knew her personally. But Redfern's account of Bentley's legacies (he does not indicate any source for this unless Mrs. Baxter told him in her old age) does not agree with the actual will, which is in Lichfield Record Office, and of which I have a copy ; it was dated February 23rd, 1801. It does not mention Mrs. Baxter. Bentley, however, bequeathed "to my maid servant Elizabeth Johnson, £20, to be paid one month after my decease ; also my bedstead with hangings . . . lately standing in the front garret, the little bed made purposely for her, also three chairs which stand in my own room." He left household goods, plate, linen, and china not already disposed of, and his other personal estate to his housekeeper Sarah Fletcher of Uttoxeter. Interesting items specially mentioned are "to Elizabeth Calvert, of Yeavley, my gold watch with a chased case" ; also "to Joseph Phillips, of Rodsley, my gold watch with an elephant's head engraved upon it" ; also to Miss Drake,

grand-daughter of the Rev. Jeremiah Ives, "the miniature picture of her mother which she presented to me at the time of her marriage"; also "my ring with the Lord's Prayer in it of my own writing set under a crystal."

In a codicil I found the following : "As Sarah Fletcher, daughter of John Fletcher, late of Uttoxeter, left me contrary to my expectations, I hereby cancel the legacy." This codicil was dated February 6th, 1802.

The maid-servant, Elizabeth Johnson, mentioned in the will, must have been later the Mrs. Baxter, whom Redfern knew personally. She related to Redfern that she used to read to her almost blind employer; also that she remembered a visit by Lord Gardner, who was immediately recognised by his footsteps by Bentley; she also remembered that Lord Gardner said he had been given titles and honours, but had not been rewarded as he ought to have been.

Redfern refers to this maid-servant as having the maiden name Jones; it seems probable that Johnson (in the will) must have become confused with Jones (in Redfern's account). There is no mention of £90, Elizabeth's legacy (according to Redfern) but the £20 legacy (in the will) was supplemented by other items, and may well have enabled Elizabeth Johnson (later Mrs. Baxter) to become the owner of a house on the Heath (according to Redfern). She is called "the late Mrs. Baxter" by Redfern, but some property on the Heath was still owned by a Mr. Baxter in 1890.

We conclude with two specimens of Bentley's work, the first a lament after his loss of eyesight, the second the lively beginning of his poem on the River Dove and the Uttoxeter Countryside. Both poems show 18th century characteristics.

1. Oh ! what avails it, favoured by the muse,
 In flights poetic that I penned the lay ?
 Glee both in youth and age, formed to infuse ...
 No Satire from my pen e'er winged its way.

But oh ! the sad reverse one fatal day,
 The thunder rolling with tremendous crash ;
 The vivid lightning winged its rapid way,
 Blasting my eyes with instantaneous flash.

2. Uttoxeter, sweet are thy views !
Each scene of my fond boyish days,
Past pleasure in fancy renews,
While gratitude sings in thy praise.

Here plenty with copious horn,
Dispenses her bounties around,
And rosy thy sons, like the morn,
In health and in spirits abound.

Thy buildings, what though they are plain,
And boast no magnificent dome,
Enough for the wise may contain,
Enjoying true pleasure at home.

How happy thy poor, who enjoy
Possessions o'er want to prevail,
Whose hills daily bread can supply,
And sweet milky tribute the vale.

Redfern continued his account of distinguished Uttoxeter persons with the story of Admiral Lord Gardner ; we have already noted his friendly acquaintance with Samuel Bentley. Alan Gardner was born in the old Mansion, then "Uttoxeter House" (now in error named the "Manor House") opposite the present Council Offices. There had been a notable house there from the time of Mary Browne about 1629. Previously it had belonged to Walter Mynors, and later passed to the Flyer family ; Redfern records that he examined the house after the death of Dr. Taylor, followed by the sale in 1877. There was a carved inscription, he noted, in an upper room thus : R.B. 1600 M.B. ; though Redfern used a copy of the Duchy survey of 1629 in which Mary Browne is listed, he does not seem to have concluded, that M. B. in 1600, was the Mary Browne of 1629, then a widow. Redfern, however, actually crept into the secret chamber which resembled many hiding places in houses of that period ; usually they were intended to hide Roman Catholic priests, against whom stringent laws were in force in Elizabeth's reign. Unfortunately more recent owners have allowed various alterations to the house and the "Priest's Hole" has really ceased to exist. It can be traced behind the panelling of an octagonal upper room, and the late Mr. Wainwright, of Messrs. W. S.

Bagshaw and Sons, when making an inventory, found that one panel gave way when he leaned against it, showing the hidden chamber much as Redfern described it. With the aid of Mr. Corder, the present owner, Miss Payne Hall, and Mr. K. Pountain, I examined the site in June 1973 and found that the floor of the secret room had collapsed, and that a kind of well-shaft continued downwards into the cellars of the house. The roof timbers are of oak, wonderfully preserved ; in fact, old mortice and tenon joints in some indicate that they had previously supported other building. Whether the hidden chamber ever housed a priest seems doubtful, for the Flyer family appear to have had Roman Catholic enemies, one of whom killed Thomas Flyer, who was mentioned as a martyr by Samuel Clarke ; Redfern was able to give the record — a book by Clarke published in 1677.

Redfern's reference to the visit of the Duke of Cumberland to Uttoxeter during the Jacobite rebellion of 1745 has already been given in Part VI of this work, p. 34.

The future Admiral, Lord Gardner, was born in this house in 1742, the eighth son of Col. Gardner of the 11th Dragoons. Following the custom of that period, he became a midshipman on the "Medway" at the age of 14, and by the age of 16 had already been in action and seen the capture of a French man-of-war. He served in several ships under his first Captain, and in 1759 (not 1769 as Redfern stated) was in action under Hawke at Belle-Ile, off the Atlantic coast of France ; this Island was occupied by the British for two years. After five years' service, Gardner was promoted to Lieutenant, and later became Commander of a 16-gun vessel, the "Raven". His next appointment was as First Officer in the "Preston", flag-ship of Rear-Admiral Parry, and there followed a period of service in Jamaica, during which he married the daughter of a West Indian planter.

In 1775 he commanded the frigate "Maidstone", and was cruising off the Atlantic coast of North America when he was fortunate in capturing a French man-of-war after a fierce duel. He was next promoted to command a "seventy-four", the "Sultan", and took a prominent part in the action against the French fleet at Granada. His ship was sent to Jamaica for repair and return to England. He was soon back in the West Indies under Rodney, commanding the "Duke", and taking part in the great victory over the French fleet in 1782.

He was naval commander of the Jamaica station until 1790, when he was appointed a Lord of the Admiralty, and became M.P. for Plymouth. In 1793 he returned to the West Indies as Rear-Admiral. His flagship the "Queen" was a ship of the line with 98 guns. After a short period he returned to England and took part under Earl Howe in the famous fight against the French fleet on June 1st, 1794. His conduct there brought him special thanks from Earl Howe, and a baronetcy.

During the next three years he gained further honour ; he was promoted Vice-Admiral in 1795 and in an encounter with the French fleet at Port L'Orient he was second in command to Lord Bridport, while he was successful in dealing with a mutiny at Portsmouth (1797).

He was with the Channel Fleet in 1800, and in that year was raised to the Irish Peerage and made Naval Commander of Ireland. This was followed by being raised to the Peerage of the United Kingdom in 1806.

He was then Admiral of the Channel Fleet, but his health failed, and he died in 1809. He had been M.P. for Westminster in two Parliaments, and as we have already recorded, complained to his friend Samuel Bentley, the Uttoxeter poet, that he had been awarded titles and honours but little else.

He was succeeded by his son, Rear-Admiral Alan Hyde Gardner, who had also served in the Navy with distinction ; he had been with the fleet at the Cape of Good Hope when it was taken by Admiral Sir G. Keith Elphinstone in 1796 ; and from South Africa sailed with a squadron of nine vessels to Ceylon, which was surrendered after only two days. Ceylon remained a British Colony until it was given self-government in 1948.

The Barony continued until the death of the 3rd Baron in 1885 ; he left no male issue, but the grandson of the Rear-Admiral, Alan Hyde Gardner, is described as taking the title as 4th Baron ; however, it appears that he took no active steps to establish his right to the title.

In the St. James Gazette Nov. 15th, 1901, it is reported that he actually took his seat in the House (C.P. Vol. V, p.620).

Yet the same volume mentions that there was a descendant of Rear-Admiral Harington Gardner, Alan Hyde Gardner, who was also considering a claim to the Barony ; this descendant was born in 1878.

According to Debrett the Barony is dormant at present.

Alan Gardner, Baronet, Rear-Admiral, and Lord Gardner of Uttoxeter in the peerage, both of Ireland and the United Kingdom, was undoubtedly the chief Uttoxeter-born person we can record.

In the attainment of titles, more recent years have other instances. Sir Edward Nelson, of Alleyne's Grammar School, Uttoxeter, and Newcastle High School, together with Sir David Chadwick, also of Alleyne's, Uttoxeter, were both Indian Civil Servants knighted for their work in India in the early years of the twentieth century. The same rank was reached by Sir Ralph Oakden, son of the Rev. Roger Oakden, Rector of Bramshall.

One may well ask if any district of our small size can boast three such awards in the same period. Uttoxeter may well be proud of such sons, Lord Gardner being, of course, the chief.

The next person who made Uttoxeter famous was Mary Howitt, born at Coleford, Gloucestershire, in 1799. Her parents were Samuel Botham and Ann Wood, whose real home was in Balance Street, Uttoxeter ; Samuel Botham had been apprenticed by his mother to a Surveyor in Sheffield, and one of his first professional undertakings was to survey and enclose common land on the Heath (we have already noted that various enclosures had been made there in previous years — (see Part VI p. 38). He was also employed in surveying estates in Shropshire, South Wales, and elsewhere. His work brought him into contact with Quaker friends at Coalbrookdale, where iron smelting was already established, and in which he later became financially involved in Coleford.

His wife was a descendant of William Wood, a famous metallurgist who was given a contract by Sir Robert Walpole in 1722 for making copper coins for Ireland. Owing to Dean Swift's opposition to Walpole, criticism of the coins was made, despite a favourable report by Isaac Newton.

Ann Wood had joined the Society of Friends and had numerous happy acquaintances in many parts of Britain, from Cornwall, South Wales, Northampton, London, and Wolverhampton. She related to her daughter some time afterwards that on several occasions she met Dr. Samuel Johnson. Her father was a man of wide reading, interested in any movements of philanthropy ; there is no doubt that this beneficent character was later of great influence on the Botham family ; Mary Howitt, nee Botham, describes more than once the splendid education provided and supervised by both father and mother.

Samuel Botham and Ann Wood were married in 1796 in the Friends' Meeting House in Swansea. He was described in the certificate as "Ironmaster", and it is true that he shared with two brothers named Bishton an interest in such work. He and his wife had occupied the family house (shared with Samuel's father, an eccentric herbalist) in Balance Street ; but in 1798 Samuel was persuaded by the Bishtons to give up his interest in their ironworks in order to acquire some iron foundries in the Forest of Dean. The venture was not a success, the stormy winter of 1798 flooded the works, and no help was forthcoming from the Bishtons. In the midst of these troubles, on March 12th, 1799, a second daughter was born, and was given the name "Mary" (in Hebrew — bitter) to mark the hardships suffered by the family at the time. But an offer of surveying work arrived from Quaker friends at Ross, and Samuel and his wife sold some of their furniture at Coleford, and took lodgings in Ross, sending beds and other effects to Uttoxeter. When the survey work was completed they returned to the old house in Balance Street, and in 1801 Samuel was appointed as one of the surveyors to take charge of the disafforestation and enclosure of Needwood. This work occupied 9 years and despite the destruction of many amenities, brought good agricultural land into use, and prosperity to the Botham family ; also by a fortunate coincidence the Bishton brothers decided that it was incumbent on themselves to compensate Samuel Botham for the losses he had sustained at Coleford.

The frequent opportunities afforded by the surveying, road making, establishing new farms and similar work, allowed the two little girls and their mother to enjoy country life,

and to study both plants and animals ; this love of rural scenes never left Mary Botham ; in her own work published later ("My Own Story", "Wood Leighton", etc.) she wrote of the lovely Uttoxeter Countryside, its heritage of wild flowers, noting in particular many which have now become rare, such as the Snake's Head Fritillary (*Fritillaria Meleagris*) which until after 1900 could be found in the Town Meadows, and was the subject of a painted design by the late E. M. Mellor ; and in her own words --- "Enchanter's Nightshade and the rare four-leaved Herb Paris, bearing its berry-like flower at the central angles of its four leaves".

She was described in a manuscript marginal note by Thomas Hart in Redfern's own copy, now in the possession of H. V. Bamford, Esq., as "I remember this Mary Howitt (Botham) well, and think I see her now bringing home large bunches of flowers, which she was fond of gathering in the fields."

Her father not only took his family to the Needwood enclosures but to such places as Ingestre Hall, for he was often in correspondence with Lord Shrewsbury ; in the books mentioned above we find such descriptions (written years later from memory) as "trees and plants in Timber Lane" ; or again, "the old castle of Chartley, standing close to the highway. It was an ancient, very grey pile of ruins, on the edge of a fine old park, in which were preserved the remains of the original wild breed of British cattle, similar to those at Chillingham." Mary knew the Loxley, Chartley, Weston-on-Trent road to Stafford very well, for the Uttoxeter Meeting House had (and still has in 1973) close connections with the Friends' Meeting House at Stafford, and the Botham family travelled there to join in the meetings. In writing her own story, Mary Howitt mentions that the house in Carter Street, separated from the Meeting House by a garden, was the home of Mary's uncle and aunt, John Summerland and his wife ; Anna and Mary were occasionally allowed to visit them when their father and mother were not at home ; on such occasions they would enter the empty meeting house and sit either on the "men's side or the women's, or even in the gallery, where the preachers sat."

John Summerland was the brother of William Summerland, whose farm was on the High Wood, and who held a contract for supplying the British Army with mules ; a curious error appeared in a letter I received from a Lincolnshire farmer in which it was thought that William Summerland was the breeder of the famous "Durham" ox ; this was one of the newly introduced "Shorthorn" breed which was the subject of discussion in the village inn in George Eliot's "Silas Marner". This famous ox was taken on show to most towns in England, and was the subject of paintings in farm books. But the Summerland's did not breed or even later possess this great animal. However, Mary was kept in close contact with the countryside by this relationship ; besides, Samuel Botham himself farmed some land beyond Timber Lane, and used to take his family to see all kinds of farm work in progress, and Mary recollects in later years that Samuel's father took the children (while he had been left in charge during their parents' absence) to see the small 18 acre farm. I have been unable to find the exact site, but Mary recalled that half of the land was growing grass for hay, while the other part was arable, with flax for her mother's spinning, wheat, and turnips for the farm animals.

Samuel Botham had kept in touch with a Quaker family at Heanor in Derbyshire, into which one of his half-brothers had married ; both he and his father thus were acquainted with Thomas and Phoebe Howitt, but the children had no contact with them, and their mother Ann Botham had unpleasant memories of their grandfather's herbalist activities ; his dried herbs had frequently made Ann Botham unwell with their pungent odours. She particularly disliked one herb supplied by the Heanor Howitts, called by them "asarabacca", which had caused her violent headaches. This plant was used by herbalists of that time, and earlier, for producing a kind of snuff for the relief of catarrh.

The old house where King Charles slept on his visit to Uttoxeter in 1642 was still standing, and the two children were taken there by their mother to call on Miss Copestake, the daughter of the jewellery manufacturer referred to previously in this work. But as the business had now failed, the premises were neglected ; Mr. Hart, referred to above, wrote in the margin of the book from which I have quoted, that he

owned the old house and had it destroyed lest it should fall ; Redfern's book contained this note ; the land on which the old house and its gardens, orchard, stables, etc. stood, was used for building several villa residences ; the remainder was still open with trees and shrubs on the south-east of Dove Bank until the building of houses for police in 1971.

Mary Howitt's recollections included that of the large club room at the Red Lion Hotel, used for Quaker meetings, when large numbers were present. She also remarked that this walk from Balance Street through the Market Place was only allowed on such occasions. This solemn kind of early life might have produced a gloomy sort of personality, but fortunately this did not happen ; more than once she speaks of the wish she and her sister had at times for prettier frocks, livelier entertainment and so on. But the education she received was thorough, and the lively humour of the children (without any unpleasant traits) was not suppressed by the unfortunate experiences which came from their parents' desire to interfere as little as possible in a "natural" development ; the children were not instructed in any definite religious matters — they did not even learn the Lord's Prayer until they heard their fellow pupils in Mrs. Parker's school next door repeating it. This school was begun by Mrs. Parker in the house of a Baptist minister, the Rev. Stephen Chater, tenant of Samuel Botham's house next door ; its name is still preserved, Mayfield House, though at the time of writing it is empty and due for demolition under the scheme for improving Balance Street.

Though Anna and Mary were not allowed to mix intimately with the twenty or thirty other pupils, however, the change from home teaching to regular instruction under Mrs. Parker's care was later described by Mary as a "happy, pure, and beneficial period." Their mother's choice of maid-servants and nurses (another sister, Emma, and a little brother, Charles, had increased the family to four) had not always proved to be of good influence upon the two older girls. We know the surnames of two nurses — Finney and Woodings — and those names still occur in Uttoxeter, though after more than 250 years it is impossible to trace their relationship.

When the baby Charles was born, Mary tells us that a nurse, Rhoda, whose home was in the Market Place, was engaged ; she proved to be by no means a good influence, and when this was discovered Samuel and Ann Botham realised that outside contact of the right type was necessary ; hence the attendance at Mrs. Parker's school. When Mrs. Parker retired, Ann and Mary were taken by their mother to a new Quaker school at Croydon.

It happened that the long journey by chaise was made in three days, the second of which was the day fixed for celebrating the Jubilee of King George III. Mary later recalled staying at Leicester, and seeing bonfires, processions, music, open-air feasting and so on. After these exciting scenes they found London rather dull, but Mary's chief recollection was the contrast between their own extremely dull Quaker clothes and those of their fellow pupils. The school provided the two sisters with their first Christmas celebration ; exchange of presents, a Christmas Tree and other new experiences Mary described later as "astonishing". Excursions round the Surrey countryside were naturally enjoyed, but in some respects the school was "defective, the tuition imperfect" and it was really a benefit when the sisters were recalled to Uttoxeter by their mother's illness. In 1811 Mary was at another Friends' School at Sheffield, and it was at this period that a visit to relatives in South Wales by Anna and her mother brought into the experience of both Anna and, later, Mary, some knowledge of Welsh legends and other literature, including Dante, Petrarch, and Spenser. But their father was not satisfied with their attainments, and engaged Thomas Goodall, a master "of the only boys' school in the town" (which seems to have been Alleyne's) to teach "Spelling, Latin, and the globes". Their teacher died soon after, and another Quaker teacher of Mathematics proved an unpleasant kind of man. So Samuel Botham fitted up a schoolroom on the premises, where Anna and Mary taught their sister and brother, and twice a week were allowed to teach poor children. Their mother kept their spare time well-occupied ; we have previously noted that she kept her spinning wheel to provide a great deal of yarn for old Pedley the weaver ; his family name could be found in Uttoxeter until recently. One might have thought that their own education, their efforts to teach sister and brother, and to help poor children to read and write, all

these might have wearied the two teenagers as they would be termed now ; but Mary specially mentions that though they seldom had an idle moment the home “possessed a charm, a sense of repose which we felt, but could not at the time define. It was caused by our father’s correct, purified taste —” But the rather restricted life did not prevent Anna and Mary “always seeking and struggling after the beautiful.” What we did was from innate yearnings of our own souls for perfection in form and colour”. Mary had especial memories of plaster decorations for mantel-pieces made by William Taylor of Uttoxeter, and of the beautiful products of Josiah Wedgwood’s works designed by Flaxman.

She remembered too, that when her father and mother were away in Wales, Anna and she in secret made smart clothes for their friend Martha Astle, daughter of Rev. Daniel Astle ; he had been a captain in the British army in the war of American Independence, and was persecuted by rude boys because he was alleged to have run away at the battle of Bunkers’ Hill. He had later taken orders and became Rector of Bramshall. Redfern mentions that when Daniel Astle died in 1826 at the age of 83, his library was sold by auction, Redfern himself owning two volumes of a translation of the tragedies of Aeschylus. He did not add that Anna and Mary Botham had often borrowed from their friend Martha many books such as Spencer’s Fairy Queen, works of Rousseau, of Jonathan Swift, and other writers. Much of this reading was in secret, to avoid their father’s displeasure. Their reading (and incidentally, that of their mother) was widened by contact with two local families ; first with Mrs. Stubbs, widow of the vicar of Uttoxeter, who died as the result of a coach accident, and the second from the two daughters of Mr. Bell, a banker who lived in the old Uttoxeter House where Admiral Lord Gardner was born. Samuel Botham joined with Mr. Bell in some business matters and so raised no objection to the intimacy between Anna and Mary and the Misses Bell.

In this way the two seekers after good literature (and their mother) were enabled to extend their education. In 1817 they visited their cousin Rebecca, of Groby, near Leicester, and there heard fine reports of their distant relative William Howitt, of Heanor. The following year he came to Uttoxeter to visit another cousin, Susannah Frith. Anna and Mary were able to study botany with William, and Mary recalled with pleasure a special excursion by the town meadows

to Doveridge Mill -- a most picturesque region which she remembered in detail sixty-seven years later. They also introduced William to many of their favourite places of interest in the neighbourhood — Alton Towers, Croxden Abbey, the Weaver Hills, Bagot's Woods, Chartley Moss (one wonders if they knew its true character), Tutbury, and Sudbury.

These romantic rambles led, as might be expected, to genuine love between William and Mary, and as her father raised no objection, their engagement followed ; William was then twenty-six, and Mary nineteen.

On April 16th, 1821, they were married in the Uttoxeter Meeting House ; she wore the first silk gown, dove-coloured, with a white silk shawl, the first time she had ever worn such clothes. It may be interesting to note here that in her later writings she often refers to the difficulty she and her sister Anna experienced in striving to bear with patience the restrictions in regard to clothing, choice of books considered fit for reading, choice of companions of their own age, and so on. When their mother took them to their first boarding school at Croydon, they saw public dancing at their hotel in Dunstable, and were allowed by their mother to see such entertainment from an upper gallery.

Samuel Botham was one of the more rigid members of the Society of Friends, and one of his principles was that religious influence should be allowed to penetrate each human personality without any critical examination of theological details. Mary tells us (many years later) that while William Howitt was visiting the Uttoxeter family before his marriage, he happened to ask her (the whole family sitting quietly one evening) what she thought of the Godhead of Jesus. Her father broke in with "We have nothing to do with such subjects, William."

Despite the rather restricted early years of the two sisters and the somewhat peculiar attitude of their father to religious matters, together with their mother's strict observance of Quaker customs regarding plain clothing, the children's life was not unhappy or lacking in useful and pleasant experiences. Long walks with their mother around the historic and picturesque places in the Uttoxeter district, drives with their father, not only to Stafford to the Friends' Meeting House, but to

the woodlands where his surveying work in Needwood enclosures for the Duchy of Lancaster occupied him for a number of years.

We have already mentioned their unusual opportunities for reading, frequently books borrowed from the few friends whom they were able to meet socially ; they were thus well-educated, though the small private school next door and the boarding schools at Croydon and Sheffield were the only formal schools they attended. But we have also recorded their father's insistence on providing local tutors in subjects which he considered they needed. Becoming engaged at the age of 19, although Mary was less advanced in learning than her future husband, she gained enormously from his association, for he was a man of exceptionally wide literary knowledge, and his country childhood gave him experience in farming and in rural conditions of society. He had also gained practical skill from his apprenticeship to a Mansfield builder and cabinet maker ; though he never intended to follow any such trade, the time was by no means wasted. Lord Byron's home at Newstead was near, and he was by that time recognised as a great poet, and William Howitt never lost interest both in the man and in the old Abbey to which the poet never returned after leaving England in 1816. His body, (in charge of his Uttoxeter valet Fletcher, whose relatives lived in Balance Street near the Botham home) was brought to Nottingham for burial at Newstead, and Mary recorded their sorrow to find the lying in state and funeral arrangements (this was during William and Mary's residence in Nottingham) so unworthy of a great poet.

In 1823 Mary again encountered death ; her father, after a short illness, died in that year, and another link with the former rigid life was broken. But we ought to record influences which worked in the opposite direction. We have already seen that Mary and Ann had become familiar with literary works which their father considered unsuitable. There were also other factors which tended against the narrow Quaker life ; the Botham family had maids in whose charge the two girls heard legendary stories, mysterious tales of the supernatural and so on. They even learned to play whist, which was of course a breach of the rules of their Quaker father. Fortunately, too, Mary and Anne were both lively children, with a greater sense of humour than might have been expected. Mary includes in her memories this account of an extraordinary resident in Balance Street, a lady named Anne Clowes, the

widow of a clergyman, who called herself the Rev. Anne Clowes. Mary described with no little fun the life of this eccentric lady. Although her previous high position in religion enabled her to continue social connections with such persons as Mary's mother, she lived in a poor house in a small alley.

Her bedroom was furnished with an old trough which had been used to salt pork ; here she slept surrounded by all kinds of old china, and similar objects ; in her trough she had a whip to keep off the rats. Yet visitors of distinction called upon her, and Mary tells us that on one occasion Lord Waterpark's sons were descending the stairs after a visit and accidentally one of them trod on a mutton-pie, which was ready to be sent to the baker. In Mary's own words, "Each Whitsuntide we saw her marching at the head of the Odd-fellows' Club, with a bouquet of lilacs and peonies blazing on her breast up to her chin, holding in one hand a long staff, her usual outdoor companion."

Another rather sly hint about their mother can be found in the description we have already given of the scene at the ball at Dunstable. Again we have Mary's own words : "The obliging landlady led us to an upper gallery, whence we could look down on the arrivals. Our mother, who accompanied us, even permitted us to watch the opening dance." Perhaps Mrs. Botham herself enjoyed this glimpse of the gay, moving scene, "for she did not reprove me when, overcome by the day's excitement, by the music and flutter, I was seized with an uncontrollable fit of laughter." There is also some touch of humour to be found in her account of how her father reacted to Mary's betrothal to William Howitt ; he was evidently pleased with his proposed son-in-law, but with typical restraint confined his expression of pleasure to the comment that there was a greater attraction for suitors among young Uttoxeter Friends than for those of Leek. Later Mary herself seems to have been almost unconscious of the humour in her account of the fare provided by the rather unsatisfactory inn where William and Mary stayed in their belated honeymoon tour of Scotland ; their rather meagre supper was supplemented by a glass of whisky toddy : there does not seem to be any sign of Quaker restraint in this, or indeed when many years later they entertained guests in London with weak negus !

Mary's married life began with a short residence in Hanley, where a small business of Chemist and Druggist was carried

on. Soon, however, a move was made to a similar shop in Nottingham. Meanwhile William had taken his wife over most of the romantic scenes near his Derbyshire home, and much of their early writing was inspired by country life. They were also influenced by the social conditions which they found both in Hanley and Nottingham.

After William and Mary decided to give up their Nottingham Chemist's business, they migrated to London, where for many years they busied themselves in writing, often in conjunction, such books as were in demand, and which made them well known as authors. Later they considered that their children could be better educated in Germany, and lived for three years at Heidelberg. William was a first-rate linguist, and was soon on good terms with German friends, and, as usual, took the opportunity of writing about the people and places ; his articles found favour with London publishers. Mary laboured at the language of their new home, and learned Swedish and Danish in order to publish translations into English ; among these were most of the stories of Hans Anderson. However, they found it wiser to return to London in 1843, and to leave their children at school, except the two youngest --- Charlton (who was only 3, and who many years later lost his life by a canoe accident on Lake Bremmer in New Zealand), also Margaret, only two years old, who many years later helped her mother to write her biography. Margaret actually lived to the age of 90, living as a sister of the Bridgettines in Cornwall ; she died there in 1930.

The return of William and Mary to England was at a time when economic and social conditions were most unfavourable for authors. It is not without cause that history tells of the "hungry forties". William as ever wrote vigorously against any kind of distress, but Mary was worried not only by the poverty she saw, but because their own writing income was not really abundant. In 1848 an attempt to establish "Howitt's Journal" was a failure, though William's book on "Homes and Haunts of British Poets" was published in 1847. Mary's translations of Hans Anderson were not easily sold at first, but the famous Danish writer begged her to continue. This difficult financial time was rendered more sad by three more losses by death ; and Claude, their son, had to be brought by his father from Heidelberg in 1844 ; his leg had been seriously injured in horse-play by an English companion.

The injury resulted in death, despite the loving care of father and mother. Mary's sister Emma died in the United States, and her mother, Mary Botham, also died in 1848, at the age of 85.

In the same year the Howitts moved to a house nearer to the West End of London and St. John's Wood. Their sons were nearer University School ; Dickens, whom they knew well, lived near, as did other authors such as Coventry Patmore. A further unpleasant event was the deceit of a man named Youl who forged begging letters supposed to be sent by the Howitts to such prominent persons as Lord Macaulay, Lord Russell, Sir Robert Peel and others. Although William Howitt sent a detective with their elder son Alfred to Liverpool to arrest Youl, he escaped.

In 1850 another sad event came to William and Mary when Wordsworth died. Though their acquaintance with the poet was not very intimate, nevertheless they had had the family as visitors in earlier days at Nottingham, and had always admired Wordsworth's nature poems. On the other hand they received an invitation to write for Charles Dickens' magazine "Household Words".

Through their arrangements for the training of their eldest daughter Anna Mary in Painting, they became close acquaintances of the famous artists Holman Hunt and Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

Mary also decided to attend a Unitarian Chapel at Hampstead ; her religious opinions and habits, though always sincerely Christian, were not often exact ; we have previously noted that she had never wholly devoted herself to Quaker customs and rigid habits, especially in matters of dress and choice of reading. From their high ground in North London they could see the Crystal Palace, and took great interest in the Great Exhibition of 1851. They began a joint new book on the "Literature of Northern Europe", and worked hard to make it a success. There was also a great desire on William's part to visit Australia. His doctor brother Godfrey had some years before settled in Melbourne ; when gold was discovered in 1851, William thought that his two sons, Alfred aged 21, and Charlton now 15, would find prosperity there ; and he

himself longed for an open-air change, more like his early days in rural Derbyshire. He hoped that even at the age of 60 he might be able to acquire a fortune for old age for Mary and himself. In fact this fortune did not materialise, and Mary had to work hard in England. She had taken a smaller house at Highgate, where her eldest daughter, artist Annie, lived with her. In 1853 William decided to try for another year. At home Mary continued her hard work, and joined in the public outcry over Slavery ; the publication of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in 1853 had increased opposition to the American continuation of negro slavery. Mary was able to pay a visit to Uttoxeter in 1853, and found herself regarded as a celebrated writer. The Crimean War made her more anxious over finance, for she wrote to tell William about the rise of prices of most necessities brought about by the prospect of war. By the end of 1854 William was back in England with Charlton ; Alfred had found promising openings and stayed in Australia, where he later became known as an explorer. He was engaged by the government to try to find what had happened to the Burke exploring party and carried out his search until a complete discovery of their fate was known. Mary and William had cause to be proud of their son and his high standing with the colonial government there.

After William's return to England, he had as usual, made full use of material gathered in Australia, publishing "The Squatter's Home" and "A Boy's Adventures in Australia."

Mary and William had been attracted to the growing interest in Spiritualism, even holding seances in their home ; but their object was to be more closely associated with what they had always considered the existence of a universal spirit ; an influence which embraced the worlds of both living and dead. They disliked any other object in seances or consultations with so-called "mediums", whom they often regarded as frauds. William made deep research into the "History of the Supernatural" as his new book was entitled ; this was wholly a scientific type of publication, and Conan Doyle (himself along with Sir Oliver Lodge a believer in Spiritualism) years later claimed that Howitt was a "veteran of spiritualism and a pioneer". Mary agreed entirely with her husband's attitude. We can hardly doubt that this interest in the unseen

world was the main reason for her adopting the Roman Catholic religion after the death of William in 1879.

Before he died, William (with the support of Mary) had worked with characteristic vigour in attacking all types of social evils, (materialism, the need of more freedom for women, the militarism of France and Germany, Cruelty to Animals, lack of planning in the extension of London and great cities, the support of slavery by the Southern States in the North American Civil War, and so on). Despite William's radical views on all these matters, it is good to learn that Disraeli had arranged a Civil List Pension of £200 for the Howitts. Mary had refused to take half of this for herself, though she had once written to her elder sister Anne, "Oh, Anne, I am weary of this poverty." So she was now happy to say with characteristic unselfishness, "I preferred to have it only for William. We have some royalties ; they say one can live in the Cotswolds on £200 a year and keep a pony carriage."

In fact, it was to the Continent that they went to live in 1870. During the previous ten years they had become known as writers by many more famous literary persons ; we have already noted their acquaintance with Wordsworth, Tennyson, Dickens, Thackeray and the rising number of women writers. Their own works were destined to become less important and not widely read towards the end of the 19th century. Mary's chief works to survive are some poems for children ("Will you walk into my parlour?", said the Spider to the Fly") and translations of Hans Anderson.

Mary had re-visited her old haunts in the Uttoxeter district ; we have a number of letters about Alton Towers, Dovedale, the Uttoxeter Church Chimes, and the rural atmosphere which still remained.

One unhappy episode arose from acquaintance with John Ruskin ; his social reform projects were approved, but some adverse criticism of the art of Mary's eldest daughter Annie Mary led to what was almost a nervous breakdown for the sensitive girl ; she had painted a large scene in oils, Boadicea, the British Queen, brooding over her defeat by the Romans. Ruskin's critical letter said, "What do you know of Boadicea ? Leave such subjects alone, and paint me a pheasant's wing." We do not know how far Annie Mary's art deserved either her parents' high opinion or Ruskin's rather harsh advice ; but, partly influenced by the family's

experience of spiritualism, Annie, when asked to paint a bluebell wood for her aunt, covered the canvas with painted snakes, saying that the spirits told her to do so.

However, Mary and William were consoled when in 1859, an old friend, Alfred Watts, married Annie. The earlier part of this year had given Mary great pleasure, as she had been able to show Margaret the beauty of the Dove valley and other old haunts of her own childhood.

So William and Mary in 1870 were able to have a change for which no doubt they had longed during some arduous years. They had already re-visited North Wales, where they had previously spent some happy times ; they had also enjoyed the Isle of Wight rural scenes ; they had been able to let their London home to Florence Nightingale for a short time ; she had been unwell and needed a quiet home for a time.

Their life on the Continent included a stay in Switzerland, where they heard of France's disasters in the War, and eventually reached Rome, where the settlement of Italy was noted by Mary as bringing there members of various Protestant sects who were glad to note that the Pope's temporal power was over.

William, as ever energetic, roamed the countryside and studied ancient remains. Their wanderings extended to the Tyrol. Here, though Mary was now 73 and William 79, they walked and climbed among the Dolomites.

After a short visit to England with business over publishing, William returned to their village home outside Rome ; for some years they alternated between there and the Tyrol. Among English visitors whom they met were the Fitzherberts of Tissington, which the Howitt's remembered for the well-dressing. (Redfern was particularly interested in this village where he had been to school). This alternation between summer in the Tyrol and winter in Rome continued until 1878. But in the Spring of 1879 William caught cold and only survived until March 3rd. He was buried in the Protestant Cemetery at Rome, not far from the grave of the great poet John Keats.

Mary's future was made secure by a Civil List pension of £100 per annum. But for some time she was seriously ill and

compelled to rest. However, she planned an autobiography ; it must be accurate, and for this she wrote to her sister Anna, who, she said, had much clearer recollections of their childhood days. (Two slight examples of Mary's inaccurate memory can be noted in her account of visiting Pedley the old weaver opposite Popinjay, where she thought they passed Willslock on the way ; also in thinking that her father, driving to Stafford, had to pass Tixall. However, at the age of 80 such small details may be ignored).

Mary's daughter Margaret (Meggy as her mother called her) had inherited her uncle's wealth, and planned to build a house at Ineram in the Tyrol for herself and her mother, to be called in German "Marian - ruhe", i.e. Mary's Rest. In 1882 Mary's elder sister Anna (she was born at Uttoxeter in 1797) passed away, and Mary, two years younger, felt her loss most keenly. In her desire for an outward form of religion which would help her to rest from the many religious problems which had troubled her far more than they had affected William, she allowed herself to be received into the Roman Church.

Mary was to endure another loss by death ; her eldest daughter Annie visited the new house, and enjoyed the company of her ageing mother. But Annie had never been strong, and her lungs were so seriously affected by her exposure to a storm that she died before a message could be sent to her husband in London. Mary herself suffered in much the same way but recovered for a little longer. However, she found the winter of 1887 - 1888 too severe, dying peacefully in her sleep on January 30th, 1888. She was, by her own request, buried in the Protestant Cemetery where her husband lay.

I have written this account in greater detail than Redfern, for, next to Dr. John Lightfoot, Mary Howitt was probably the greatest personage Uttoxeter can claim ; I have also included much of her husband's life and work, for they worked together in a long, happy, and useful life. Uttoxeter can be proud of them. It is notable that Redfern thought more highly of Mary's correspondence with him than that of any other person ; so much of the Uttoxeter she knew, and the neighbourhood, has changed that we must treasure what we still have. Fortunately we know enough of her life here when young, and her later long career, that she is not likely ever to be entirely forgotten.

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